

### A bit of eastern heritage goes west

LAST week demolition of the former Eastern Arcade at 131-135 Bourke Street was completed. This was despite it being classified by the National Trust for being "the best example of the 19th century Moghul style in Melbourne".

Had its charming facade been retained and restored as the National Trust and the Melbourne City Council fought to achieve (and which would have been easily achievable had the will been there), it would have been one of the glories of upper Bourke Street. The developer could even have sought funding from the Melbourne Heritage Restoration Fund to assist with costs.

So hats off to Minister for Planning Justin Madden who approved the demolition permit. There's nothing quite like developers being given free tickets to demolish our heritage to inspire absolute confidence in government.

Peter Jordaan, South Yarra

B6878

## LA MAMA THEATRE

*La Mama fights on, still in the red*

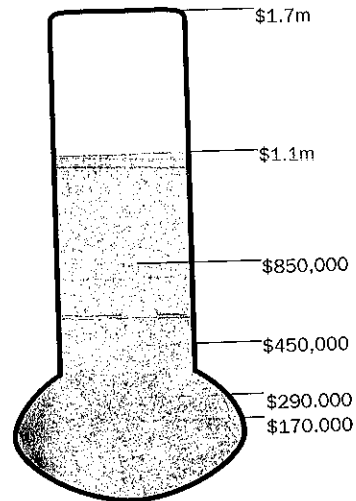
THE fund to save Carlton's La Mama Theatre has slowed after major donations from two philanthropic partners had the theatre buzzing last week.

Artistic director Liz Jones said donations were steadily trickling in to the theatre's fighting fund, averaging \$1000 a day.

Last Monday, a \$250,000 donation from the Sidney Myer Fund and a \$350,000 donation from the Pratt Foundation pushed the fund to \$1,090,000. The donations were a major boost for the embattled theatre company, which needs to raise \$1.7 million by September 2 to buy the 125-year-old Faraday Street building it has occupied for the past 40 years.

Earlier this year, lawyers acting for the building's owners told Ms Jones the owners intended to sell it. La Mama was given first rights to make an offer, and its bid was accepted.

The theatre company's board will meet with Melbourne MHR Lindsay Tanner this week and



Melbourne Council's community services committee in coming weeks to seek further funding. By Monday, donations had reached \$1,100,000. For more information, visit [www.lamama.com.au](http://www.lamama.com.au)

— Bianca Hall

# Council jumps at shadows

By **KATE LAHEY**  
CITY REPORTER

TRUSTEES of Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance have applauded a move by city councillors to thwart plans for a high-rise tower that could cast a shadow over the memorial's grounds.

The council's planning committee has voted to change the height controls on the site at 312-332 St Kilda Road, Southbank, to restrict any building to 25 metres above the footpath or 36 metres above sea level AHD

(Australian Height Datum).

An application by the Overland Development Corporation to build a 110-metre-high building has been lodged with state planning officers.

The land had a limit of 36 metres above sea level until 1999, but the control was not included in a new scheme introduced that year. Residents and trustees had urged the council to restore the restriction, but the developer argued there should be no height limit.

Councillors this week voted to request Planning Minister

Justin Madden to adopt a planning scheme amendment to revert to the mandatory limit of 36 metres above sea level.

Trustee Dimity Reed said the shrine and its grounds must be protected from shadowing.

"This land is sacred," she said. "This is land which actually embodies Australia's character, its entire cultural sense of itself, and to have a building behind here overshadowing this would indicate this society cared more about money than . . . what we should be caring about as a nation."

# Dig then divert

A Yarra bridge initially went over dry land, writes **Jenny Brown**.

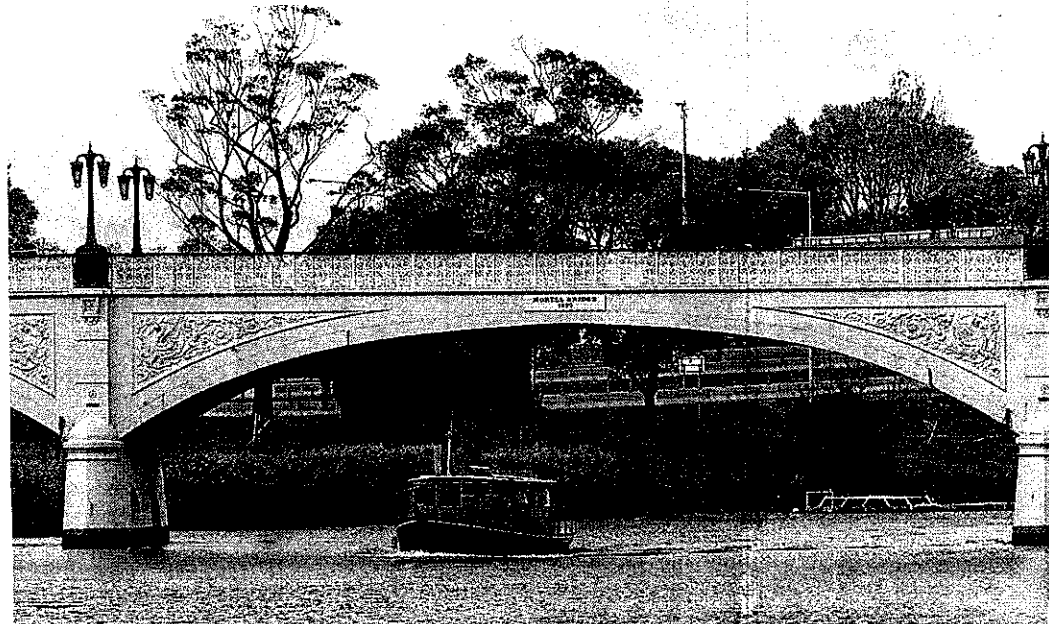
**H**OW surreal must the Morell Bridge in South Yarra have looked in 1898 when it was finished? It was built over dry land.

The Yarra's prettiest bridge, with its cast iron piers, lacy iron balustrades, dragon motifs and elegant lamps, appears as a post-card piece of Victoriana.

Yet it was revolutionary for its era in using a new technique of reinforcing concrete. The Monier method was so novel to engineering that the concrete was rammed by hand.

The Morell Bridge, or Anderson Street Bridge, was built to span the Yarra and complete a carriage-circuit around the south bank's most picturesque parklands. But where was the Yarra?

In 1898, as hundreds of men began digging a straight new channel, the old river was still



The Morell Bridge, or the Anderson Street Bridge, was built first and then the Yarra was diverted under it.

meandering along its ancient course and bellying into billabongs on the edge of one of the world's great pleasure gardens, The Royal Botanic Gardens.

In the last ditch dig of a 20-year-long process that had been attempting to streamline the worst kinks in the habitually flooding river, the billabong was cut off and taken into the core of the gardens to become the duck-skimmed Ornamental Lake.

The flowing water was taken into the man-made riverbed under the hand-made Morell Bridge in 1901.

The Botanic Gardens cut was the last of three downstream engineering epics that over

20 years had radically rerouted the Yarra to expedite the movement of seemingly annual floodwaters out to the bay and the movement of shipping upstream from the bay to the wharves.

The taming of the "the torturous river" first cut off the Yarra from its meeting with the Maribyrnong River at Footscray. It used to flow roughly along Footscray Road. Engineered by Sir John Coode in the 1880s, and dug by armies of formerly unemployed navvies, the Coode Canal cut three kilometres from the river's length.

The other great public works scar born by our river is the gun-

barrel cut stretching from Swan Street to Princes Bridge — the sober river-and-skyline scene that gives TV weather presenters their definitive Melbourne backdrop.

Having stood up to a century of wear and tear from all manner of wheeled vehicles, the Morell Bridge was closed in 1997.

The digging of the Domain Tunnel in a much deeper cut was judged to have potentially undermined its foundations.

It remains there, however, heritage-listed, pretty as a picture and solely for pedestrian and cycle traffic.

The Morell Bridge is at Melway 44 B12.

# Oh Boyd, this one's a keeper

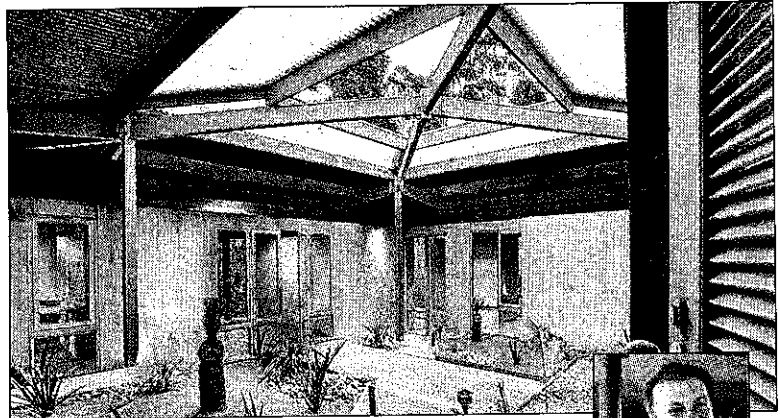
**R**OBIN BOYD enthusiast and lawyer Peter Mitrakas is a happy man. Having worked to restore a house designed by Boyd in Frankston South following its purchase in February last year, he was resigned to selling the property after failing to find someone to rent it.

But since he put it on the market in June with a listed price of \$950,000, a renter has come forward and Mr Mitrakas says he is no longer selling the property. "I'm happy that I've been able to rent it and keep the house."

Built in the late 1960s on land abutting Sweetwater Creek, the timber and glass property (known as McClune House) comprises a series of pavilions around a central courtyard under a parasol roof.

Mr Mitrakas says he did have to carry out some minor work on the property to help attract a renter — including adding heating and freestanding cupboards. "Icons aren't always liveable, are they?" he says.

As well as McClune House, since 2006 Mr Mitrakas has also owned the Boyd-designed Baker and Dower houses near Bacchus Marsh. These are available for short-term lease.



McClune House was on the market, listed at \$950,000, but a renter has saved the day for (inset) owner Peter Mitrakas.





## Play money appeal

MELBOURNE'S show business community has come out in support of Carlton's La Mama Theatre as it battles for its future. The company's director, Liz Jones (pictured) and friends have been rattling fund-raising buckets to audiences of both the Melbourne Theatre Company and Circus Oz.

The money goes to the \$700,000 still needed to complete the \$1.7 million purchase of the former lingerie and shirt factory that has nurtured such theatre luminaries as David Williamson and Cate Blanchett over the past 40 years.

The owner of Her Majesty's Theatre, Mike Walsh, is making it available for a benefit on August 25 that will be supported by Live Music Australia (details still being finalised), and Carlton's Dancehouse is holding another benefit on August 1.

Six evenings of can rattling after performances of David Williamson's latest MTC production, *Scarlett O'Hara at the Crimson Parrot*, with the energetic support of cast member Monica Maugham, raised \$18,000. Jones says the support was literally staggering — about \$1000 was raised in coins every evening, making it a heavy trip from the theatre. Circus Oz presented the company with a cheque of nearly \$3300 after more post-show donations. Jones will address the full meeting of the Melbourne City Council tonight in the hope of more support. "People have been very generous," she says. "Every day we open the mail and receive cheques in support of the campaign worth on average \$1000." Donors should send their cheques to PO Box 1009, Carlton 3053.

THE AGE

18 July, 2008

B6592

(FORMER) BUCKLEY & NUNN EMPORIUM & LIFTS

**IN BRIEF**

**DAVID JONES**

**City heritage sites**

THREE David Jones buildings in Melbourne's CBD have been given heritage protection for their architectural, historical and social significance.

The Victorian Heritage Register listing comes as the Bourke Street department store prepares for an \$85 million redevelopment.

The buildings are the two former Buckley & Nunn buildings on the north side of Bourke Street and the former Coles building on the south side. The Heritage Council said the buildings were fine examples of their architectural styles.

**Restaurant icon dies**

THE restaurateur who spent some 40 years building the reputation of one of Melbourne's most iconic restaurants, Florentino, has died.

Restaurateur George Tsindos, who in 1941 teamed with Leon Massoni to take over the prominent Bourke Street restaurant from Leon's father, ran Florentino's until 1979, wining and dining Melbourne's bourgeoisie.

Business really boomed from 1954, when the Florentino licence changed and the illegal selling of imported wines, spirits and cognacs that was reputed to have been rampant, could now be sold openly.

TBM managing director Rodney Morley is marketing the 99 Spring Street apartment Mr Tsindos called home. He says the the apartment on the 16th level, with views over Parliament House and Treasury Gardens to the Melbourne Cricket Ground, should fetch more than \$1.25 million.

Mr Morley says 99 Spring Street is Melbourne CBD's first high-rise apartment tower. Business identities including Frank Packer and Robert Holmes a Court have called the building home at some stage.



George Tsindos



# Living it up at the Lodge

**M**ELBOURNE Victory chairman Geoff Lord and his wife, Nanette, have quietly put their palatial Balwyn home on the market, a month after their last child left the house.

The soccer team chairman and businessman has been accepting offers for the 101-year-old Salisbury Lodge, at the heart of Mont Albert Road's golden mile at 1 Salisbury Street, for most of the year, sources say, but a formal campaign was launched this week. The couple plan to downsize and relocate to South Yarra.

Mr Lord bought the seven-bedroom, six-bathroom property, on a massive 4956-square-metre block, more than 20 years ago for a price believed to be just under \$1 million.

This time around, the house could sell for more than \$8 million and set a new record for the suburb.

Abercromby's selling agent Lisa Jarrett and Jellis Craig, Balwyn, director Peter Dixon declined to

comment on the campaign when contacted by Secret Agent.

Mr Lord, who was recently caught up in the collapse of share lending group Primebroker Securities, could not be contacted.

Salisbury Lodge is sure to test the strength of the prestige property market, which has been battered by recent sharemarket dives and negative economic sentiment.

## Mansion's rosy future

THE historic Caulfield North property Rosecraddock — where owner and eccentric millionaire Peter Sheppard was murdered in 2005 — has been subdivided.

Glen Eira City Council says that under new plans, six blocks of about 700 square metres will be carved out of land at the front, back and side of the 150-year-old Italianate mansion.

Rosecraddock had until recently occupied pride of place at the centre of the 8857-square-metre block.

One of the newly formed blocks has an asking price of about \$1.5 million.

All up, the blocks could fetch about \$9 million — or about \$1.2 million more than the developer paid for the whole estate last year.

Title records show ownership of the heritage-listed Rosecraddock homestead was recently transferred to former television presenter-turned-Telstra public affairs manager-turned-businesswoman

Simone Semmens, who could not be contacted. Ms Semmens, an avid buyer and seller of property, made headlines in 2004 when she paid \$7.5 million for the historic Noorah property in Portsea.

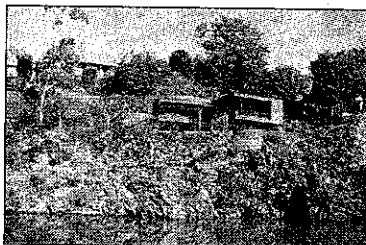
Mr Sheppard unsuccessfully tried to demolish Rosecraddock and subdivide the prime land into housing blocks in the mid-1980s.

He was later fined for undertaking unauthorised work on the property, breaching a Supreme Court order.

## Buy me a river

ALSO getting the chop — officially — is a portion of land belonging to the heritage-listed Edzell estate in Toorak.

Stonnington City Council and Heritage Victoria last month approved plans by Edzell's architect owner, Michael Spivakovsky, to slice off 1000 square metres of riverfront land, which currently forms part of his backyard.



A portion of heritage-listed Edzell estate in Toorak is up for grabs.



Geoff Lord (left) hopes to get more than \$8 million for Salisbury Lodge.

Mr Spivakovsky employed architectural firm McGauran Giannini Soon to design a luxury five-bedroom home for the sloping block, which he hoped to sell "off the plan" for more than \$10 million.

The house has its own gymnasium, cinema, swimming pool and jetty — and a new address: 86 St Georges Road, itself worth a few million.

However, with a turn in the prestige property market, sources do not expect Mr Spivakovsky to achieve his asking price at the moment.

## Federation favourite

HE BUYS tired office buildings in top locations, renovates them and sells them at a premium.

It's a business that has allowed real estate agent-turned-property developer Brendan Sullivan the opportunity to live in some of Mel-

bourne's most beautiful homes.

In preparation for his next move, possibly to Toorak, Mr Sullivan is selling his blue Federation mansion in Armadale's Myamyn Street.

The four-bedroom house sits on a 929-square-metre block near the High Street shopping village, and includes a study, theatre, pool, cabana and established garden.

Kay & Burton director Gowan Stubbings is quoting \$3.8 million for the property, which will go to auction at 11 am on Saturday, August 9.

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Rosecraddock, where Peter Sheppard was murdered in 2005, has been subdivided.

## Boyd House given late auction reprieve

ONE of Australia's prime examples of modernist architecture, the Robin Boyd House II in South Yarra, has been spared from an auction today in an 11th hour bid to keep the house in public hands.

Today's auction, listed by real estate firm Bennison Mackinnon Carmichael, has been postponed as discussions between the State Government and interested groups, including Victorian architects and the Robin Boyd Foundation, continue.

"The postponement is fantastic news, because it appears that there is some hope that the building might remain in public hands," said Boyd specialist Philip Goad, who is president of the Victorian chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects.

The Robin Boyd Foundation, which bought the Boyd house less than three years ago for

\$2.19 million, was forced to put the house on the market because it had been unable to raise money to meet its \$200,000 a year mortgage repayments, let alone pay off the house.

Secured with the help of a \$200,000 grant from the State Government, the Boyd House II is the first post-war building to be bought under the auspices of the National Trust, partly with the intent of attracting a younger demographic to the organisation.

It is doubtful that the Bracks Government will buy the house outright. However, the Government is involved in private discussions to find a way of supporting the Robin Boyd Foundation and giving it extra time to raise much-needed money.

GABRIELLA COSLOVICH

### LINK

► [saveboydhouse.blogspot.com](http://saveboydhouse.blogspot.com)

## Saving La Mama

**G**OOD news for fans of the legendary Carlton play-factory La Mama, which is fighting to raise enough money to buy the Carlton building it has rented for 40 years.

The future of the institution that launched the careers of many of our leading theatrical lights looks almost secure as the fighting fund to raise \$1.7 million by September has hit \$1.25 million.

Melbourne's most prominent arts philanthropists, as well as plenty of other theatre groups, have thrown themselves into the fight by giving large gifts or rattling donation buckets in city theatres.

The City of Melbourne has pledged \$170,000 towards the Faraday St building, arts philanthropist Jeanne Pratt has given \$350,000 and the Sidney Myer Fund \$250,000.



**Appeal:** La Mama's Liz Jones says more money is needed.

Artistic director Liz Jones says she is "immensely grateful" to the City of Melbourne, but warns there is still an urgent need to raise the remaining \$450,000 quickly.

La Mama was founded by Betty Burstall in 1967 after she visited La Mama in New York. It has helped such luminaries as playwrights Jack Hibberd and David Williamson and actor Cate Blanchett.

The group was supported by the owner of the building until she died last year. Her estate gave La Mama the first right to bid for the building and accepted an offer of \$1.7 million.

Other groups to have pitched in are Circus Oz, the Melbourne Theatre Company and Carlton's Dancehouse.

Mike Walsh, owner of Her Majesty's Theatre, has made it available for a fundraiser next month.

**to donate > Ph: Liz Jones on 9347 6948 or mail a cheque to PO Box 1009, Carlton 3053**

**WENDY TUOHY**

B7350

## NORTH MELBOURNE GRANDSTAND

# North moves ahead with home upgrade

**BY BIANCA HALL**

NORTH Melbourne Football Club lodged plans for a \$15 million overhaul of its Arden Street home last week.

The club hopes to capitalise on a 48 per cent surge in club membership this year following its decision to remain in Melbourne.

Chief executive Eugene Arocca said the club was determined to seize the opportunity to better engage with the community.

Mr Arocca said Arden Street was the club's "spiritual, historical, tradi-

tional and logistic home", but the site was crying out for an upgrade.

"We're in a lot of ways one of the last suburban clubs, but you'd find a lot of suburban clubs with better facilities than ours," he said.

Central to the club's plan is an increase in community facilities at Arden Street, including development of a community gym, netball and basketball courts and a "Learning and Life Centre" which, in partnership with the Australian Multicultural Foundation, will provide educational programs, including employment, drug and alcohol, and health and

wellbeing sessions, as well as English lessons. One-third of the new facilities will be available for community use.

"We would defy any club in Melbourne to provide as much opportunity for the community as we're going to provide," Mr Arocca said.

The plans are currently before Melbourne City Council planning officers. If approved, the plans will be subject to a public consultation process.

North Melbourne hopes to begin construction by November and have the redevelopment completed by late next year.

# Keeping pace with fashion

Melbourne has many preferred pavements on which to see and be seen, writes **Jenny Brown**.

**T**HE art of the promenade is “to walk about for amusement, exercise or show”, according to most dictionaries, and Melbourne has always had preferred pavements for such social strolls.

In modern times, Chapel Street in Prahran has been the place to parade for show, with leggy gals and snake-hipped boys showing off the soon-to-be latest trends. If it's already out there, of course, it ain't fashion — shopping-mall style doesn't cut admiring glances from haute-street strollers, who know exactly how much those sunglasses cost. Such is the purpose of a promenade: to see and to be seen.

However, reliable Gen Y wisdom is that the hip have moved on to Fitzroy Street, St Kilda — sharp suits, even at night — and to Acland Street by day — a bit hippy but always interesting.

On the other side of town the grungy, arty collusion between Collingwood and Fitzroy, centred on Brunswick Street, Gertrude Street and the city end of Smith

Street has also attracted young, moneyed fashionistas — black on black, day and night.

Melbourne has always been good at the promenade, at least since the late 1860s, when conditions became a little more genteel for the fairer sex.

In 1850s Melbourne, men outnumbered women 2:1. The CBD was a muddy, unlit grid of filthy roads and dingy laneways where putrid gutters seeped. It wasn't considered safe, or nice, for a woman to be on the streets. It was “the social sequestration of the streets, with the footpaths as a male-dominated site”, says historian Susan Priestley.

In the 1870s, Collins Street was tidied up and made interesting for women who wanted to go abroad during the day. Milliners, drapers, jewellers and sellers of knick-knackereries set up businesses around Collins, Swanston, Little Collins and Elizabeth Streets and this sector of town became the only place in Melbourne where respectable women could walk about in public.



The Block Arcade derived its name from the tradition of “doing the block”, or parading around Melbourne's fashionable shopping streets.

Between 3pm and 5.30pm each day it became the custom for the well-dressed and the leisured to “do the block”, Ms Priestley says, glancing in shops, eyeing each other and making new acquaintances.

From a blokey, dusty place, where rubbish blew about, the city underwent a stylish transformation and “the perfumed promenade of Collins Street” developed.

The 1891-93 Block Arcade at 280 Collins Street, was modelled

on Milari's shopping galleries and was built at the height of the city's boom times. Saturdays and Sundays were the high days for doing the block: “Lightened by the presence of the ladies of the demi-monde who flaunt about in their gorgeous robes of the brightest colours.”

“Ahh,” sighed one Victorian observer. “It was a moving phantasmagoria of colour and loveliness.”

Melways map, 1B, M8.

**MARITIME**

**Cash for Cerberus**

IT has been sinking at a rate of 16 millimetres a year, but the shipwrecked HMVS Cerberus has just been thrown a lifeline.

The 140-year-old hulk, which acts as a breakwater off Half Moon Bay, Black Rock, was given an extra \$500,000 yesterday by the federal Heritage Minister, Peter Garrett. The money will help prevent the wreck sinking, the hull having collapsed in 1993. The money would allow the Cerberus to be raised and placed on an underwater platform, he said.

The Cerberus, an iron-hulled British warship powered by steam, was acquired by the Victorian government in the 1860s as a powerful warship to protect the coastline.

SUNDAY HERALD SUN 27 July, 2008, p. 26

B5509 MELBOURNE CRICKET GROUND & PAVILION

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## **A grand master**

THE redevelopment of the MCG has been given a top building award.

Grocon won the prestigious Master Builder of the Year award for its \$430 million revamp of the "iconic" Melbourne landmark.

The Master Builders Association's Excellence in Construction Awards were held last night.

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